

Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee

Tuesday, November 15, 2011, 6:00 PM

Lyman B. Goff Junior High School Auditorium

974 Newport Avenue, Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02861

I Meeting will come to order

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

a. Roll call

Mr. Araujo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Spooner-here

The Chairperson announced that Ms. Bonollo would be late.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairperson.

V Executive Session

The Chairperson commented that the Committee would possibly recess to executive session in accordance with provisions under Title 42, chapter 46, Subsection 5 (a) (1) job performance, character, or physical/mental health (2) legal advice and litigation/collective bargaining of the General laws of the State of R. I. for the purpose of discussing and/or acting upon approval of Deputy Superintendent and Business Administrator contracts and to seal executive session minutes.

Mr. Coughlin moved to recess to executive session. Ms. Nordquist seconded.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms.

Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion passed six in favor.

The Committee recessed to executive session from 6:04 PM to 6:42 PM.

Ms. Bonollo arrived at 6:13 PM.

VI Reconvene open session

The Chairperson reconvened the open session at 6:49 PM.

a. Roll call

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Spooner-here

II Recognition/Celebration

Mrs. Cylke: This evening we really want to celebrate this beautiful facility we are in today. The Goff Theater has had a complete makeover. The project was started in May, 2010 and completed in November, 2011. The total cost of this project was \$1,199,000. This project consisted of major demolition of the existing auditorium. Renovations consisted of new auditorium seating, electrical, plumbing, heating and a fire alarm system. New doors, windows, and floors were added. The ceiling and stage were upgraded. There were toilet upgrades, handicapped provisions, lighting upgrades, sound system upgrades and other trade work completed this project.

The major demolition was performed in the library area located in the auditorium. The new library is located in the old shop area. The cost for this was \$422, 000. The work was completed in 2008. The contractor was Tower Construction and the total cost of both projects

was \$1,621,000.

This project reflects the vision that I have for all of the schools in the City of Pawtucket. We have some unbelievably beautiful buildings architecturally, not all, but many. They were built in an era where the codes may not be what they are today but probably better in some ways. This renovation shows what we can expect at all of our 15 schools as we finish Stage II of our necessity of construction. I envision the community using this space. It looks new, it smells new and there is no doubt in my mind that when students come in here they behave in a way that reflects their pride.

I'd like to introduce the Principal, Ms. Lisa Bendetti-Ramzi.

Mrs. Beneditti-Ramzi: Good evening. I'm proud to be in front of you to boast about our most recent renovations our library, auditorium and our SmartLab. It started with the auditorium and library project. While I'd like to take credit for a smidging of the idea, the idea to renovate the auditorium began from what I am told from a student initiative back in 1998 when a group of ambitious students and two teachers started an after school group to develop a plan. A plan to improve their school and restore what was once a great community space in their school. Their plan was even presented to the School Committee in 1999 and I don't know what happened between 1999 and 2008 but with a little imagination and a lot of fortitude this became a reality.

I remember the day I received a phone call from the then Superintendent, Dr. Hans Dellith, who said "hey how would you like your auditorium back?" Well from that point on it's been a whirlwind.

I've learned more about blueprints, beams and tresses than anyone would want to know. I've picked color swatches and carpet tiles and wood panels. I have the architect on speed dial often time much to his chagrin.

Before the auditorium could even be a thought, we had to relocate and design the library. We did that and it was finished in 2008. In May, 2010 we started on this space. We had our first event three days after receiving our certificate of occupancy. The total cost of the library renovations was \$422,000 and was done by Tower Construction and that had to be done before they could begin the auditorium. The new library is in the old shop area.

Joe reports that this was one of the biggest projects.

In fall 2010, we were given a learning opportunity with and academic program with our fabulous new SmartLab. In our SmartLab students can live and breathe 21st Century skills by working with an on some of the newest technologies. In fact, we have a short video for you this evening that was created in our SmartLab giving you a snapshot on our stages of all of our improvements—the possibilities of a little imagination.

I'd like to recognize Mr. Chris Colson who is the facilitator in our SmartLab and my twin who is up on the stage, my assistant principal, Mrs. SanMartino.

Our very first performance is coming up. It is a theater performance. It is A Christmas Carol. We have for the first time in a very long time a Goff band and chorus and they are both doing a holiday concert.

So please enjoy the space and Debbie you were right the kids respect

the space. I think when you have a really nice space they rise to the occasion and they act appropriately.

Thank you for watching the video and thank you for letting us do what we do for the kids.

VIII Report out vote(s) of executive session of 11/15/11 if applicable
The Chairperson asked the Clerk if there were any votes to report out of executive session.

The Clerk reported that the Committee voted unanimously to approve and accept the employment contract for the Deputy Superintendent, Ms. Kimberly Mercer. The Committee voted six to one to approve and accept the employment contract for the Business Administrator, Mr. Thomas Conlon. The Committee voted unanimously to seal the executive session minutes and to adjourn the executive session.

III Student Representatives

Shea

Anton: Next Friday there is going to be a homecoming dance. There hasn't been one the last two years, due to lack of ticket sales and we sold 50 tickets this week and we're really proud to sell that many tickets in one week. The seniors can be really proud leaving the school with the school pride going up during spirit week. Even the freshmen are buying tickets. Next Wednesday is our annual Thanksgiving football game against Tolman.

Liana: Shea's Got Talent is this Thursday. It's our talent show with singing, music and dancing. My Confucius class will be going to Boston this Thursday to visit the Science Museum and see all of their exhibits and learn about Chinese history. Our boys' soccer team

played in the championships last Saturday in the Division I against LaSalle and lost. Our Key Club started up and it's a student run organization and we fundraise and do community based service throughout the community. This Friday at 4:00 PM we are going to be working with URI Pink Ladies who are former Shea students who come from very ethnic schools and urban city schools and we are going to a domestic violence house to help pass out toys and clothes to students. We have a play coming up, Cinderella in January. We have been rehearsing rigorously and will be sending out an invitation.

Anton: We have a China Club that has been established in which we send students to China and they send students here. Our China Club this year will learn Mandarin Chinese. There is a professor that comes in once a week from URI, and he teaches them Mandarin Chinese and I think that is really exciting. We are having a canned food drive headed by the key club. Every homeroom is going to be bringing in canned goods and the winner gets a pizza party.

Mr. Spooner: Thank you.

Tolman

Jerilynn: We are starting a drama club. There was a chorus performance on Veteran's Day and there will be another one on December 3rd at the lighting of the tree. Spirit week will start November 21st. The Thanksgiving Day game is on the 23rd. It's our big game with Shea. The girls' and boys' cross country went to New York and Manchester New Hampshire for a marathon invitation. The girls' soccer team missed the playoffs, but for individuals they have done really well so far. The girls' volleyball team had 13 wins and is

2nd in their division. They went to the State quarter finals. As for the girls' soccer team, it was their second year in division II and they missed the playoffs by one point. The boys' soccer finished 2nd in their division. The football team was division co-champions and went to the State quarter finals and it is the 10th annual Thanksgiving Day game this year.

JMW

Michael: For the first time ever, the senior theater majors competed in statewide improvisational theater competition. For the competition there were about nine schools and what happened was they gave us a topic and we had to create a 15 minute play based on that topic. It was all student run. It had nothing to do with the teachers and we ending up winning the competition and got a trophy and get to keep it until next year when we have to try to hold our title.

Destiny: As of recently, in October, we were in Pawtucket, the U. S. Healthy Foods Challenge and I had the privilege of going to Washington, DC with my mother and other representatives such as Solange Morrisette who is heavily involved with Sodexo and it prompted for school cased salads, wrapped sandwiches and a hot Panini bar. So we are definitely moving up in our lunch to healthy and delicious choices. We had over 100 or more applicants to JMW this year for incoming students. We recently at JMW we are competing in penny wars and the benefits will go to TWOLHA—To Write Love On Her Arm. The benefit will help those who need treatment for depression, suicide who can't get the treatment for themselves.

Michael: This year we have our fifth annual cabaret this Thursday and Friday at 7:30 PM. We have a production of the Mouse Trap coming up. This is the first year we had a student run production. It's an Agatha Christie production and it's December 1st, 2nd and 3rd and we actually have the male and female leads. We play husband and wife and run a bed and breakfast and someone gets murdered. It's a who done it. We have a great chorus and for the first time ever it's open to everyone, not just music majors. They will be performing at the Winter Wonderland in Slater Park on December 4th. On December 13th the chorus will be performing at the State House.

Destiny: Also coming up for the winter we are having our holiday showcase on December 20th. The theater department and music department will be showcasing what we have been doing so far throughout the year.

IV Public Participation

Mr. Fred Silva: Thank you. Mr. Silva read from a prepared statement.

Please refer to the attached

Addendum A.

Mr. George McLaughlin: Good evening. I'm George McLaughlin. I'm head of the guidance department at Tolman High School. I've been in education for the last thirty years almost half of those years working in public education in New York City public schools and the rest in Rhode Island. I think that's important to note because that's why I came up here to speak. I constantly hear people say since Tolman has been as a failing school under Race To The Top and our current Commissioner of Education that we are not Central Falls and we will

not be like Central Falls and that bothers me because I was there for fifteen years. Part of my heart is still in Central Falls. As is with all of us when someone close to us dies, to watch what happened to that school for me, was one of the saddest parts of my professional career. It will never leave me. Central Falls has nothing to be ashamed of. Central Falls was a proud, noble, poor tough place with pretty good schools in spite of everything and instead of reforming it, I think it was destroyed.

I wanted to come and say a couple of things about misinformation because reluctantly I kind of became an expert over what happened to Central Falls.

There is a severe difference in No Child Left Behind and Race To The Top. Once you enter from NCLB to RTTT you are in a completely different league. It's like going from Pop Warner to the NFL. It's a very dangerous thing to be designated a failing school under Race To The Top because if those schools were a designated school in that district do not have someone or some entity to protect them, severe damage can be done as with Central Falls.

Central Falls High School is under the Transformation Model out of the four options offered from the Race To The Top. It is not under the Turn Around Model and technically has never been.

In the name of reform, Central Falls High School, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many of my colleagues who were there and are still there and are devastated. Forty three faculty have left out of eighty four replaced mainly by inexperienced teachers. School discipline is almost non-existent. Student population has almost dwindled.

Faculty morale is at its lowest. Test scores have descended. The graduation rate has gone down. If this is reform, I don't want any part of it and nobody who cares about themselves professionally or morally I'm sure doesn't want any part of it. I'm sure this School Committee doesn't want any part of it.

So what is the difference here from Central Falls and Providence and places like them? We have an elected School Committee that represents the people of this City—a huge difference. I told my guidance counselors just after arriving at Tolman—half my job is to make sure you do yours. The other half of my job is to protect you from undo unjust and damaging criticism. What you do now on the School Committee in the coming months will be part of your legacy as elected representatives of the people of this district. Because you are speaking for the people not vested interests, not Arnie Duncan or the Secretary of State or even Deborah Gist the Commissioner of Education but the people who live here and send their children to school here. Some day you will be asked by the citizens of the City of Pawtucket and when you are called upon to do so, what did you do to protect our schools? Schools like Tolman from undo unjust and damaging criticism that may have caused permanent damage to our children's education.

It is my hope that your answer will be the same as the people of Cranston and their School Committee and their City Council and their Superintendent and that answer is a resounding everything, I did everything to protect these schools. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Ouellette: If anyone in here is a parent, could you please stand

up. I'm so sick of it! We can't stand it! My question is what are we going to do as parents to fix it?

Whoever came up with Super Kids, thank you. As far as education, it's so important. Don't we have truancy officers? How do these kids just drop off the face of the earth? As parents we have to take responsibility.

How are we going to give our teachers what they need educationally?

Is there a plan to make those things accessible for other kids?

My husband graduated from Goff and went on to New England Tech.

Anything I can do to help, I will give you my email address.

Thank you.

VIII Acceptance of previous meetings minutes: 8/25/11; 9/27/11; 10/11/11; 10/14/11; 10/15/11 and 10/27/11

Ms. Bonollo moved to accept the previous meetings minutes of 8/25/11; 9/27/11; 10/11/11; 10/14/11; 10/15/11 and 10/27/11. Mr. Araujo seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

IX Presentation(s) – Discussion Items

a. FY11 Budget

Mrs. Cylke: I'd like to call forward our Assistant Business Manager, Maggie Baker along with Mr. Conlon.

Typically this time of year we give you an update on the previous year's budget and how we ended. As I mentioned earlier, the auditors are in the building. They have been for about a week and they aren't quite done so when they are done we can come back to you with a formal report. We feel this is pretty accurate and gives you a good

feel for where we are.

Ms. Baker: I wanted to update the Committee on the FY11 financial results and I have some background information from the end of fiscal year 2010 the state reduced our revenue by \$1.8 M. In addition to that we had a \$480,000 operational deficit and what has happened with that is both amounts are part of a deficit reduction plan that has been submitted to the state revenue office by Ron Wunschel who is the City Finance Director.

Mr. Conlon: As Maggie said, our intention and hope was that we would be able to not only finish FY11, the year that just ended June 30th at a breakeven point or surplus but also that we would also be able to make up the \$480,000 of our operational deficit from the year before. We are planning on ending FY11 with a small surplus of \$10,000 which we're thrilled with. The auditors even thought that was pretty good given our circumstances.

However, we were not able to make up the \$480,000 and there are three major factors:

1. We had counted on \$180,000 in stimulus Medicaid money that the state had said they were going to process for us and in February they changed their mind. DHS, Department for Human Services reversed themselves and decided not to do it.

2. Additionally you may remember we had hoped to have a \$900,000 medical reserve at the end of the fiscal year. It turned out to be approximately \$760,000. At the time \$900,000 seemed like a decent number, but you never can tell what's going to happen between one period of time and the end of the fiscal year.

3. There was another \$158,000 we did not see in realized unidentified cuts. Those unidentified cuts are chiefly the unpaid leaves that teachers take. It's based on a formula, it's come close in most years, but this year a chief component of that is we had our special education out placement expense rose considerably at the end of the year.

Those three factors alone are the reasons we were unable to make up the \$480,000 deficit from the prior year. As Maggie said, Ron Wunschel has included the \$480,000 along with the \$1.8 M that the state hit us for and is proposing for the deficit reduction plan that he submitted to Rose Mary Gallogly at the state level.

Mr. Coughlin: Tom, have you totally depleted the medical reserve account?

Mr. Conlon: As of June 30, 2011, we have.

Mr. Coughlin: There was nothing in it?

Mr. Conlon: There was nothing in it in July. We used it down to zero. We get billed by Blue Cross weekly and Delta Dental bi-weekly and as of right now we are looking at about \$700,000 towards the end of this fiscal year. But you never can tell what's going to happen.

Mr. Coughlin: So we don't carry the medical reserve forward from year to year then?

Mr. Conlon: It was zero. But we started funded it in the month of July.

Mr. Coughlin: Had we not depleted it in June?

Mr. Conlon: It would have stayed in that reserve account.

Mr. Tenreiro: Is this something we have to vote on at the next

meeting to reconcile?

Mr. Conlon: No, it's just a presentation to let you know where we are. The auditors by state law have to be done by December 31, 2011. It's a combined city, school and water department audit.

X New Business-Action Items

a. Approval of amendment to 403(b) plan that allows rollover contributions

Mr. Conlon: This is the 403(b) plan and it is nothing more than really housekeeping. As I mentioned in the report, our prior third party administrator really didn't have the capacity to handle the rollover distributions from a prior employer. The new third party administrator, CPI, does and in fact recommends that we do put this amendment to the plan through so if someone comes in from another district and they want to rollover another plan with a 403(b) plan they had with their former employer; after this is passed, they now can. CPI is a huge organization that makes sure not only the employees, but we as the owners of the plan follow IRS regulations. It's very controlled. So this meets with all their compliance issues and I ask for your approval.

Mr. Coughlin moved to approve the amendment to the 403(b) Plan that allows rollover contributions. **Mr. Noonan** seconded.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

XI Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Cylke: I had an opportunity to visit Tolman when they had their NEASC visits and spent a good hour and a half with the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Committee. As Mr. Silva conveyed and I think the thing that really struck them was being in Tolman High School and the very positive relationship while the kids and teachers talked about what was very evident to them. I think the focus of my conversation was in defense of Tolman's staff and students was really a highlight for them what I felt the school lacked and the very first time I met with Tolman and Shea staff I know technology is not there. I'd like to see JROTC. Fred and I looked into that and are still pursuing that; relevant electives and equipment for relevant electives; textbooks haven't been purchased in a number of years. I've explained the funding level here in Pawtucket and the disadvantages we are at and the staff simply accepted that, stayed focused and pushed through for the kids. I didn't share this to make excuses, this is a reality. Tomorrow I am meeting with the Mayor and he invited Tony Pires to meet with my Chairman and Vice Chairman to layout for them what I believe has to change in terms of our funding in order for us to meet the very basic needs of students.

I want to start on the FY13 Budget early and my intent is to have an open conversation and will report back as to how that conversation went. It will be very much like the information I shared with the NEASC representatives.

I want to commend Tolman High School's Freshman Facilitator, Laura Olsen. They had a freshman family night and there were so many teachers there—parents, students and the goal was for them to

connect that family engagement early on in their freshman year. I certainly enjoyed the meal and the many students and teachers who were present. I want to compliment Tolman and compliment Laura Olsen.

I also want to let you know that the Rhode Island Philharmonic is very desirous of continuing a partnership with Pawtucket. Today I met with their executive director and what they'll be bringing to all of our fourth and fifth graders is through a grant with Hasbro and the Philharmonic. In April they will all get to attend a concert and in providing materials through another grant through Carnegie Hall to make that concert visit very really and very participatory on part of the students. They'll be meeting with everyone of our music teachers to share with them the information and provide every student with a recorder. They have really pledge their commitment to Pawtucket. I think mainly because they think we're going to get to where we want to be and that is really restoring our music programs at all levels. Ultimately the high schools have the feeder programs they need for real high quality choir programs, strings, orchestra, and jazz band. It was a very positive meeting and they were able to steer me in the direction where we may get some other foundation help to add to our fund that we currently have to provide more instruments for our schools.

I will share with you before you leave tonight a memorandum from the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance and Dianna has polled you for a special meeting for that.

The Teachers' Alliance would like to enter into a Memorandum of

Agreement to extend family health care benefits to teachers who have domestic partners. We welcome that opportunity to hear that presentation and will schedule that meeting once you check your availability and get back to Dianna.

I also want to inform the Committee tonight that the Lincoln School Committee asked for an advisory and it's regarding a seniority issue and that advisory has been issued and I'll provide a copy.

The last thing I want to share with the Committee is related to the public comment that was made this evening regarding Central Falls. The first thing I did when I arrived back to Pawtucket is go back to the cemetery in Central Falls. My maiden name is Allenson. The entire side of my father's family is buried in Central Falls. I grew up in this area as you know and my grandfather owned a business in Central Falls. I have a very close connection with Central Falls in a very personal way and what I meant when I said publically by not go the way of Central Falls. I am very committed that this process will not be a divisive issue and that certainly is what I witnessed 3,000 miles away watching that unfold on TV. I am very committed to working with people in a collaborative manner so that we all moving in the same direction.

I'm very grateful that Mr. Beaupre under the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance arranged for a meeting with the Rhode Island AFT President, Frank Flynn and with the Rhode Island AFT Special Development Coordinator, Dr. Colleen Callahan with Christina DiPrete and our legal counsel, myself and Kim Mercer. The intent of that meeting was to pledge our commitment to one another to work collaboratively

through this process. We then went through the Transformation Model line item by line item and early on identified what contractual issues we will really need to sit down and discuss and there's a definite consensus that we need not be divisive as we move forward but look for ways to meet the intent of that model.

Tomorrow evening, Wednesday at 5:00 PM we have invited a stakeholders committee to meet. The stakeholder committee will have administrative representatives, teacher representatives, parent, student, community members, RIDE representative. It's spelled out who is in this stakeholder group. There will also be a representative from state and local work force. The purpose of the stakeholder group is to serve as a focus group for me as I delivery my preliminary recommendations. This is not a secret. As we look at the four models it will be my recommendation that we pursue the Transformation Model. The other models are School Closure and that is just not an option. Restart is not a possibility. The state put out RFP's for management teams to come in and takeover schools and there are no responses to that RFP so there is not a company that we could interview or consider. The Turnaround Model would require that we replace 50% of the staff and to me that model simply communicating that 50% of the teachers are the problem and need to be replaced and that's certainly not an acceptable model.

I'm pleased to let you know that Mr. Beaupre of the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance is in agreement with transformation and that is the plan that I will propose to the stakeholders group and get their input. I will also let the stakeholder group know as we move forward I

believe that our transformation team needs to be much more representative of our teachers; of our community; of our administrators and of our parents. I'm going to ask the stakeholders group and propose an expansion of that group. I'm not comfortable with just nine representatives on that group as we move forward. I am hopeful that the stakeholder group will agree that's wise and expand that committee and then we will have 120 days.

Ms. Nordquist: Is the School Committee included in this stakeholders group?

Mrs. Cylke: Yes.

Ms. Nordquist: Who is representing the School Committee?

Mrs. Cylke: Mr. Tenreiro will be representing the School Committee and I think that's a wise decision by the Chairman. As we all know Mr. Tenreiro's area of expertise is in the high school.

Again, the stakeholders group is a focus group to give me feedback on the model choice. Tomorrow I will be making my recommendation that we move forward with the Transformation Model, take input from the stakeholder group. I will ask the stakeholder group to consider expanding that committee. After we do that it will be our charge collectively to come up with a plan, to bring that plan back to the School Committee, get your input on that plan, and submit it to the Commissioner within 120 days. Once the Commissioner receives the plan we can apply for a grant that aligns with the transformation plan.

The Transformation Plan requires us to do the following:

-A rigorous transparent and equitable evaluation system for teachers

The good news for Pawtucket is that Ron Beaupre and Kim Mercer have collaboratively last year developed a teacher evaluation tool that is rigorous and equitable and we are in the implementation year.

-In this transformation plan we have to provide staff with ongoing high quality job embedded professional development. That professional development must reflect the deeper understanding of the community we are serving.

- We must implement strategies such as incentives and opportunities and career growth, flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of students.

-We must require that teacher and principal will mutually consent to staff assignment regardless of teacher seniority.

Obviously that was one of the items we identified that was a contractual issue that we need to come to agreement about.

-We must use data to identify and implement instructional programs that's research based.

-We need to have vertical alignment. That's alignment from our middle schools to our high schools—an alignment in our curriculum from 9th through 12th grade.

-We must promote the continuous use of student data to inform our instruction.

-We must establish early warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing early in their tenure of high school.

-We must increase learning time in community oriented schools.

-We must establish strategies and schedules that provide expanded

learning time for those students who need more time. Provide more on time mechanisms for family and community engagement.

-We must provide operational flexibility and give schools sufficient operational flexibility with staffing, calendars, time and budgeting to implement this plan.

Those are really the requirements of the plan. When we met with the AFT workers they were, it was “we can do.” We identified the two contractual issues and again it was a pledge to work collaboratively as we move on so that is not a divisive issue. What I said to Mr. Flynn, the President of the Rhode Island AFT was this must be a plan that both he and I and Mr. Beaupre can send before the Tolman and Shea staff and in our hearts believe it is a good plan. It’s good for kids, it’s good for the community, it’s good for the teachers, it’s good for the administration, it’s good for Pawtucket.

I pledge publically and to the Committee and both staffs that we will work diligently as we head forward in a very positive way. By December 9th, we submit the model selection and we have 120 days. Patti DiCenso, our new School Performance Officer for Secondary Schools will serve as the Transformation Officer. We have to pick one person to lead this committee. She is within our staff in the Central Office and certainly the most qualified. She has lived and breathed high schools really her entire career. She is very dedicated to the work they have.

I will keep the Committee well informed along the way. I wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving.

XII Special Reports of School Committee Members

Mr. Araujo: Thank you.

Ms. Bonollo: Have a wonderful holiday and if you are free tomorrow night, we're having a Wellness Committee meeting at the Administration Building at 6:00 PM and anyone who wishes is welcomed to join us. We have a lot of new things on the horizon that we're going to be introducing into the schools. We would appreciate any participation and Mr. Araujo is now on the committee.

Ms. Nordquist: I just want to say a couple of things about the contracts that we just extended tonight because I think we took the votes in executive session and they were reported out, but I think that I just wanted to say a couple of things.

First, both are well deserved. Tom Conlon has been extremely helpful, kind, open, willing to sit down and talk with me when I got elected to the School Committee. He's always dealing with people, answering questions and working with people who may have never worked on a budget before and of this magnitude he has always been there for advice and would give you the information you ask and we are grateful to have you for another year, Tom. I really appreciate everything you have done for the School Department. I think sometimes your good work goes unnoticed. We know how important it is to have a good guy in the business office. We know the City's finance director is retiring so they are going to be at a big loss there. So I'm grateful that we have Tom for another year.

The second person is probably going to kill me because she is one of the most humble and honest people I know. But I actually think that I was probably the most floored on the School Committee when not

this one, but the previous one decided not to renew her contract and to start over. I personally could not understand why we would let it get to that point when somebody who is so knowledgeable in this district and is so valuable and such an important person. She has vast knowledge of Title One and other areas of the district and she kept this district going as interim after Dr. Dellith had retired.

Mrs. Ouellette had talked about whoever was responsible for Super Kids and that is just one of many of the things that Ms. Mercer has helped bring into this district. She is a true professional in every sense of the word. I'm glad we were able to come to an agreement for a three year contract.

On a personal note when I decided to go back to school, I will be done in December, I will be a teacher; she was very supportive and encouraging and has been an inspiration to me. In closing the main thing about her that I really like is that above all, she cares about the kids in Pawtucket. Having lived here all her life and gone through Pawtucket public schools, she's not afraid to stand up and fight for what's best for the kids of Pawtucket. Congratulations, Kim with your contract extension.

I appreciate Mr. Silva and members of the Tolman faculty coming tonight I was hoping for this—that the students and faculty would come out in support of the school. Having been in a high school myself in a teacher role, I know what it takes to be a dedicated and good teacher and I appreciate all of you coming out tonight.

I also want to give you my commitment to do my due diligence in researching all of this information and educate myself before I take a

vote as I have always done in the seven years that I have been on this School Committee.

Good luck to all the winter sports. We heard some great results from the fall sports. I know we have basketball starting but we know the best winter sport of all is competition cheerleading. Good luck to all the athletes coming up and have a good night.

Mr. Noonan: I've already congratulated Tom and Kim privately and I would like to do it publicly. Secondly, I would be remiss if I didn't thank whoever it is who is responsible for the bracelets. I think Thanksgiving is overlooked in the spirit of giving and Christmas. I'm a big Thanksgiving guy and I want you all to celebrate and have a great Thanksgiving.

Mr. Coughlin: I could not match Mr. Noonan. Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Spooner: First instead of going through the whole thing I would just say ditto on what Ms. Nordquist said on Tom and Kim—well deserved. You've been here a long time and I hope you are very well appreciated by the people you deal with.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone but I think I'll see some people next week and I hate doing this but, go Tigers!

Mr. Tenreiro: I think it's important at the holidays and this time of year we get very busy and take our minds off things. But I think this Tolman and Shea situation needs to be the most important on the table for all of us. I would just ask and I'm going to try and make this effort maybe not this week. I think we should go visit our Tolman family. I think we should go visit our Shea family. I think we should go visit those two schools and break out some time in those first two

weeks in December and show our face and see people and talk to people. I think it's important to do. Thank you.

XIII Adjournment

Ms. Bonollo moved to adjourn. Mr. Noonan seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

The Chairperson adjourned the regular meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee of November 15, 2011 at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

APPROVED December 13, 2011